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25. (NEW) Non-contacting conveyance equipment comprising:
 a concave opening having a continuous walled inner peripheral surface;
 an end face that opposes an object to be conveyed, the end face being formed in the concave opening; and
 a fluid passageway comprising a spout facing the inside of the concave opening, the fluid passageway ending at an opening through the inner peripheral surface, to supply fluid to the inner peripheral surface of the concave opening so as to cause a swirl of fluid within the concave opening.

26. (NEW) Non-contacting conveyance equipment according to claim 25, wherein the spout is approximately tangential to the inner peripheral surface.

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27. (NEW) Non-contacting conveyance equipment according to claim 25, wherein a plurality of spouts face the inside of the concave opening such that the plurality of spouts together cause the swirl of fluid within the concave opening.

28. (NEW) Non-contacting conveyance equipment according to claim 25, further comprising a centering guide to maintain the object to be conveyed such that the object opposes the end face.

29. (NEW) Non-contacting conveyance equipment according to claim 28, wherein the non-contacting conveyance equipment has an outer periphery, and the centering guide comprises at least three centering protrusions provided around the outer periphery.

30. (NEW) Non-contacting conveyance equipment according to claim 29, wherein the centering protrusions are radially displaced from a center of the non-contacting conveyance equipment, and

the non-contacting conveyance equipment further comprises a centering mechanism to vary the radial distance of the centering protrusions from the center of the non-contacting conveyance equipment.

31. (NEW) Non-contacting conveyance equipment according to claim 30, wherein the centering mechanism comprises:

a rotatable disk; and
arms linking each centering protrusion to the rotatable disk such that rotation of the rotatable disk changes the radial distance of the centering protrusions from the center of the non-contacting conveyance equipment.

32. (NEW) Non-contacting conveyance equipment according to claim 31, wherein the centering mechanism is pneumatically driven.

33. (NEW) Non-contacting conveyance equipment according to claim 25, further comprising a base with a plurality of concave openings are provided on the base, each concave opening having an end face formed therein and a fluid passageway comprising a spout facing the inside thereof.

34. (NEW) Non-contacting conveyance equipment according to claim 33, wherein the spouts of the concave openings face different directions such that fluid swirls in a clockwise direction in a first portion of the concave openings and fluid flows in a counter clockwise direction in a second portion of the concave openings.

35. (NEW) Non-contacting conveyance equipment according to claim 33, wherein the base is surrounded with a peripheral edge to block a flow of fluid off the base.

36. (NEW) Non-contacting conveyance equipment according to claim 35, wherein the peripheral edge has a stepped shape.

37. (NEW) Non-contacting conveyance equipment according to claim 33, further comprising at least one fluid discharge passage provided in the base to eliminate fluid supplied through the spouts.

REMARKS

In accordance with the foregoing, claims 2 and 15-24 have been cancelled, claim 1 has been amended and new claims 25-37 have been added. Claims 1, 3-14 and 25-37 are pending and under consideration.

With regard to the drawing objection, claim 2 has been cancelled.